1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5



372 a ritual attitude towards the kitchen stove. A few embers from the
783 kitchen stove and a few grains of cooked rice from a vessel on the stove are put into a dining-dish. Water is poured on the embers and rice, and a thick, ashy liquid is formed in the dining-dish. This liquid is *teḷi nīr*, and great protective powers are attributed to it. The mourners returning home on the eleventh day after performing the rites in the burial-ground, a daughter-in-law returning to her conjugal home with her baby born in her natal home, a member of the house returning from a long journey, and a newly bought calf are all sprinkled with it.

783 In the foregoing instances *teḷi nīr* removes some inimical or
778 dangerous power in the person or object that is coming into the house. People who are 'strangers' to the *okka* have this power in
● [609] them. A child of a male member of the *okka* born in its mother's
372 natal house, a newly bought calf, a member long absent from home,
596 and a mourner are all 'strangers' for purposes of *teḷi nīr*. Members of the *okka* enjoy its protection and strength while persons and objects outside it do not do so. Things that stand for the *okka* represent its strength and protective power, and the kitchen stove is an appropriate object to stand for the *okka*. The embers and the cooked rice are both taken from the kitchen stove. The kitchen stove and the dining-dish also stand for commensality which is a basic feature of the *okka* in every part of India. In fact, commensality is a legal criterion of 'jointness'. Commensality denotes the unity and strength of the *okka*. Commensality is an act of solidarity. Absence of commensality indicates division. In a country like India where all kinds of ritual rules surround eating, commensality assumes even greater importance than what it would have in another society.

372 The domestic lamp, as long as it is burning, indicates that the
776 protective power of the *okka* is active, and its going out indicates
171 the withdrawal of such protective power. Such withdrawal spells dangers to the members of the *okka*. The domestic lamp led to a consideration of the significance of the kitchen stove, and this in turn led to a consideration of fire generally and the sun. In Sanskritic or All-India Hinduism, Agni is the god of fire and he is related to Sāvitār or Sūrya, the sun-god. Agni and Sūrya are deities in the Vēdas and they are known and understood all over Hindu India. The local phenomenon of the attribution of sacredness to the domestic lamp and kitchen stove is absorbed into the